BUILDING SOLIDARITY

BETWEEN TRANS AND ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION ACTIVISMS

MEET THE PRESENTERS

Angel York
she/her

April Wick
she/her

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SIMILARITIES: JOY

In recent years the justification for transitioning has shifted from “mitigating gender dysphoria” to “increasing gender euphoria.”

This mirrors a common theme in bike advocacy. We ride for may reasons, but one of the big ones is to “put the fun between your legs”

#TransJoy

Similarities: Non-normativity

Cisnormativity & cissexism have been common terms in gender discourse for a while now.

Motornormativity & car-ism are relatively new terms, but motornormativity is catching on fast.

SIMILARITIES:
RISK OF HARASSMENT & AGGRESSION

respondents reported
harassment or disrespect

surveyed in 2009 about their
experiences of harassment
[...] reported harassment
in the previous 12 months

SIMILARITIES: RISK OF HARASSMENT & AGGRESSION

GENDER

“The National Transgender Discrimination Survey (NTDS), a 70-question survey taken by more than 7500 transgender and gender nonconforming individuals in the U.S., found that [...] When queried about the use of buses, trains, and taxis, 22% of respondents reported harassment or disrespect, 4% reported being physically assaulted, and 9% reported being denied equal treatment (Grant et al. 2011).” (Lubitow et al., 2017)

MOBILITY

“Cyclists in Queensland, Australia were surveyed in 2009 about their experiences of harassment while cycling, from motor vehicle occupants. [...] 76% of men and 72% of women reported harassment in the previous 12 months” (Heesch et al., 2011)

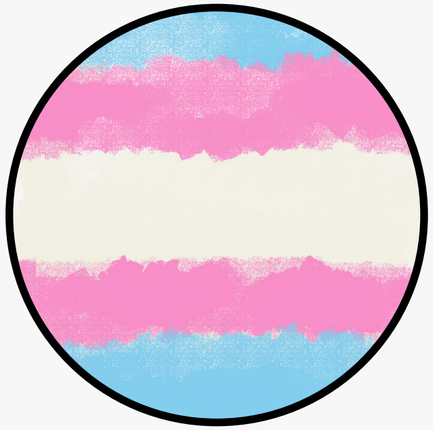
GENDER

“Our participants understood their experiences of harassment, discrimination, and violence as due to the visibility of their non-binary gender or transgender identities, specifically through their gender non-conformity or bodies that others perceived to be transgender. Conversely, participants who are largely able to avoid negative experiences attribute this to their normative gender expressions” (Lubitow et al., 2017)

MOBILITY

“research has found that a large proportion of drivers hold negative views about cyclists and these attitudes result in more aggressive driving” (Limb & Collyer, 2023)

Similarities: Identity



Gender is commonly considered central to a person’s identity. It’s right there in the phrase “gender identity”. In some places it is a legally protected class.

Hansen (2010) says that for 19th century feminist cyclist Francis Willard, “mobility is completely bound up with questions such as, ‘who am I?’, ‘what can I accomplish in life?’, ‘what do I see as possible?’” That sounds like identity!

Also, ethical concerns are among the main reasons people ride. If your transportation choices are based on your personal ethics, that’s central to your identity. It’s a choice, but you might not be able to choose differently and still be the same person.

INTERSECTIONALITY

It's harder to be a trans cyclist than it is to be either trans or a cyclist individually. The same is true for race, class, ability, and other factors:
They all intersect with both gender and mobility.

Intersecting axes of oppression may influence peoples' decisions about active transportation.

Intersecting axes of oppression may influence peoples' decisions about transitioning.

DIFFERENCES

perma-minority

Estimates of the percentage of people who are trans are increasing, but currently they don’t give us reason to expect that cis folks will ever be in the minority, and that’s not the goal of most trans advocacy as far as we are aware.

future majority

For some active transportation advocates, the long-term goal is to replace the majority of car trips with other modes.

communication

Gender is about identity and communication.

transportation

Mobility is about identity and transportation

WHY DOES THIS MATTER FOR ADVOCACY?

“Recognition of the pain of one strand of oppression by someone who does not suffer personally from it is an essential step towards establishing political alliances and for general change on a social level.”
(Rodó-Zárate, 2022)

“Similarity perceptions have also been shown to directly increase intraminority solidarity.”
(Burson & Godfrey, 2020)

Intraminority solidarity is especially important for bicycle advocacy which has a bad track record with intersectionality on many axes.

WHY DOES THIS MATTER FOR ACADEMIA?

"two quite distinctive strands of thinking about the question of gender and mobility [...]: how does mobility shape gender and how does gender shape mobility" (Hanson, 2010)

While Hanson is primarily addressing gender as a masculine/feminine dichotomy, we see the same trend in the Transmobilities literature, which using transit as something you must do because you are marginalized (can't afford a car), or something you avoid because you are marginalized (higher likelihood of violence). It doesn't talk about mobility as a way of being marginalized - about transit users being unable to access some destinations, being limited in when they can travel, and generally being treated as second-class compared to drivers.

A lot of mainstream mobility research, e.g. bicycle count data, addresses gender as a male/female dichotomy, if at all.

This is an area where more interdisciplinary work could be beneficial.

How could this relate to what you do?

THANK YOU!

CITATIONS

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Rodó-Zarate, M. (2022). The intersectional wound. Guerrilla Media Collective. https://guerrillamedia.coop/en/the-intersectional-wound/ This excerpt from the book "Interseccionalidad: Desigualdades, lugares y emociones" (Intersectionality: Inequalities, Places and Emotions) by Maria Rodó Zárate, published by Bellaterra Edicions was translated by Alex Minshall.